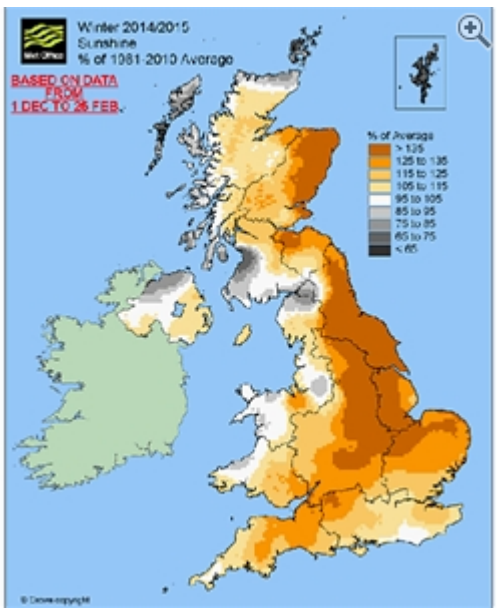
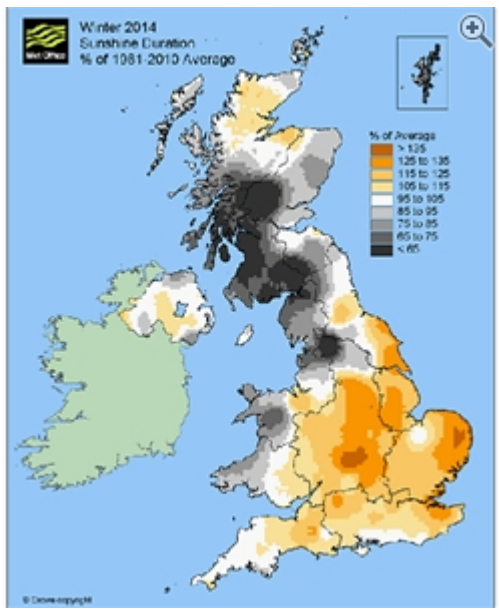
27 February 2015 - This winter is very likely to be a record breaker. Provisional Met Office statistics show that the UK has had its sunniest winter in records dating back to 1929.

While the figures for temperature and rainfall are fairly average, it has been one of, if not the sunniest winter in UK records dating back to 1929.

By 25 February the UK had already seen 189 hours of sunshine, equalling the 2001 record, but with 3 more days left to the end of the meteorological winter we are likely to beat that record by about 7 hours.



1 Dec 2014 to 25 Feb 2015 sunshine



Winter 2014 sunshine

This is in stark contrast to last winter, which was the wettest on record with 544 mm of rainfall, 65 % above average; however this winter is on target to see 375 mm of rainfall, just 8 % above average. The southern, eastern and north-east areas of England have been drier than average while Scotland it has been one of the top-ten wettest winters in the series from 1910.

Interestingly, despite last winter being so wet and characterised by the frequency and intensity of storms, many areas also had above average sunshine. This was because the storms brought the rain in relatively short, sharp bursts, and they often came through overnight. This allowed plenty of sunshine in-between the storms, especially for central and eastern areas.

The overall average mean temperature this winter is expected to be 3.8 °C slightly above the average of 3.7 °C. This compares to 5.2 °C recorded last winter.

Early figures for February show the month was drier than average and likely to be slightly cooler than average. The month showed the variety of winter weather we can get in the UK - the first half of the month being dominated by high pressure, bringing mostly dry and settled and cold weather, while the second half of the month was more unsettled with westerly winds bringing Atlantic frontal systems. The strongest winds and heaviest rain were across the north and west - with significant snowfalls across the Scottish mountains.

Early February 2015 statistics

Early figures 1-25 February	Mean temperature (°C)		Sunshine (hours)		Rainfall	
	Actual	Difference from 81-10 average	Actual	% of 81-10 average	Actual	% of 81-10 average
UK	3.3	-0.4	69.6	100	64.7	73
England	3.6	-0.6	75.3	101	44.8	74
Wales	3.2	-0.8	67.0	95	79.2	71
Scotland	2.8	0.1	64.1	102	93.6	72
Northern Ireland	3.8	-0.6	51.3	77	67.2	80

It was notably mild and on 18th February 15.6 °C was recorded at Fyvie Castle, Aberdeenshire.

ARTICLE UPDATE: Since this article was written, the full winter figures have come in and they show the UK has indeed seen its sunniest winter in our digitised sunshine records dating back to 1929. The total number of sunshine hours for the season was 196.7 for the UK, which is 125% of the long-term (1981-2010) average. This is 7.5 hours more than the previous UK record, set in 2001. You can explore more about UK climate on the Met Office's climate pages.

Last updated: 18 March 2015